

CITY OF GREAT FALLS

Chapter 2.52
CODE OF ETHICS

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2.52.010 Title. This chapter shall be known and may be cited as the "City of Great Falls Code of Ethics."

2.52.020 Findings. The *City Commission* of the City of Great Falls finds and declares that:

- A. Public office and employment are a public trust;
- B. The vitality and stability of representative democracy depends upon the public's confidence in the integrity of its elected and appointed representatives;
- C. Governments have the duty both to provide their citizens with standards by which they may determine whether public duties are being faithfully performed, and to appraise their officers and employees of the behavior which is expected of them while conducting such duties.

2.52.030 Purpose and Authority. It is the purpose of this chapter to provide a method of assuring that standards of ethical conduct for officers and employees of the City of Great Falls shall be clear, consistent, uniform in their application, enforceable, and to provide those officers or employees with advice and information concerning possible conflicts of interest which might arise in the conduct of their public duties. Such ethical standards shall inspire and stimulate each officer and employee to:

- A. Be dedicated to the concepts of effective and democratic local government by responsible elected officials and believe that professional general management is essential to the achievement of this objective;
- B. Affirm the dignity and worth of the services rendered by government and maintain a constructive, creative, and practical attitude toward urban affairs and a deep sense of social

responsibility as a trusted public servant.

C. Be dedicated to the highest ideals of honor and integrity in all public and personal relationships so that each public servant may merit the respect and confidence of elected officials, of

other officials and employees, and of the public;

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D. Recognize that the chief function of local government at all times is to serve the best interests of all of the people.

2.52.040 Definitions. As used in this section:

A. "Agency" means any agency, board, governing body, including the chief executive officer, office, commission or other instrumentality within the City of Great Falls, and any

independent local authority created by or appointed under the authority of the City of Great Falls.

B. "Business organization" means any corporation, partnership, firm, enterprise, franchise,

association, trust, sole proprietorship, union or other legal entity;

C. "Employee" means any person, whether compensated or not, whether part-time or fulltime,

employed by or serving on an agency who is not a local government officer;

D. "Interest" means the ownership or control of more than 10% of the profits, assets or stock

of a business organization but shall not include the control of assets in a non-profit entity or labor

union;

E. "Member of immediate family" means the spouse or dependent child of an officer or employee residing in the same household.

F. "Officer" means any person whether compensated or not, whether part-time or full-time,

who is one of the following:

1. Member of the City Commission
2. City Manager
3. Assistant City Manager
3. Director, Department of Fiscal Services
4. Director, Department of Community Development
5. Director, Department of Public Works
6. Director, Department of Parks & Recreation
7. Chief of Police
8. City Clerk
9. City Attorney
10. Municipal Judge
11. Fire Chief
12. Director, Library
13. Director, City Planning

G. "Officer or employee" means an officer or employee of the City of Great Falls or of an agency under the authority of or appointed by the City Commission. (Ord. 2703, 1996)

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2.52.050 Ethical Standards. Officers and employees of the City of Great Falls shall comply with the following provisions:

A. No officer or employee of the City of Great Falls or member of his or her immediate family shall have an interest in a business organization or engage in any business, transaction, or professional activity which is in substantial conflict with the proper discharge of his or her governmental duties;

B. No officer or employee shall use or attempt to use his or her official position to secure unwarranted privileges or advantages for himself, herself or others;

C. No officer or employee shall act in his or her official capacity in any matter where he or

she, a member of his or her immediate family, or any business organization in which he or she has

an interest, has a direct or indirect financial or personal involvement that might reasonably be

expected to impair his or her objectivity or independence or judgment;

D. No officer or employee shall undertake any private employment or service which might

prejudice his or her independent judgment in the exercise of his or her official duties;

E. No officer or employee, any member of his or her immediate family, or any business organization in which he or she has an interest shall solicit or accept any gift, favor,

political

contribution, service, promise of future employment, or other thing of value for the purpose of

influencing him, directly or indirectly, in the discharge of his or her official duties. In this regard,

the appearance of impropriety must be avoided by the acceptance of such a gift;

F. No officer or employee shall use, or allow to be used, his or her public office or employment or any information, not generally available to the members of the public, which he or

she receives or acquires in the course of employment, for the purpose of securing financial gain for

himself or herself, any member of his or her immediate family, or any business organization with

which he or she is associated;

G. No officer or employee or any business organization in which he or she has an interest shall represent any other person or party except the City in connection with any cause, proceeding,

application or other matter pending before any agency of the City of Great Falls. The only other

exceptions shall be in the process of collective bargaining for public employees or where any officer

or employee or members of his or her immediate family shall represent himself, herself or

themselves, in negotiations or proceedings concerning his, her, or their own interests;

H. No officer shall be in conflict with these provisions if, by reason of his or her participation in the enactment of any ordinance, resolution or other matter required to be voted upon,

no particular material or monetary gain accrues to him or her;

I. No elected officer shall be prohibited from making an inquiry for information on behalf of

a constituent if in return, no fee, reward or other thing of value is directly or indirectly promised to

or accepted by the officer or a member of his or her immediate family;

J. No officer or employee, elected or appointed in the City, shall without receiving formal written authorization from the appropriate person or body, disclose any confidential information

concerning any other officer or employee or any other person or any property or governmental

affairs of the City;

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K. No officer or employee shall approve or disapprove or in any way recommend the payment of any bill, voucher or indebtedness in which he or she has direct or indirect interests

except reimbursement for proper expenses otherwise approved by the *City Manager*;

L. No officer or employee shall request, use or permit the use of any public property, vehicle, equipment, labor or service for personal convenience or advantage for himself or any other

person. The only exception shall be where it is the general practice to make the same available to

the public at large or where the same is provided pursuant to stated public policy for the use of

officials and employees in the conduct of official business;

M. All officers or employees shall exercise prudence and integrity in management of public

funds in their custody and in all financial transactions;

N. All officers or employees shall uphold the letter and spirit of the constitution, statutes and

regulations governing their duties and report violations of the law to appropriate authorities;

O. All officers or employees shall be sensitive and responsive to the concerns and questions

of the public.

2.52.060 Nepotism. All personnel matters shall be administered on the basis of merit and

through regular management procedure except:

A. No one participating actively in the appointment of a position, i.e., City Commissioners,

City Manager, representatives of the Human Resources Department, the appointing department head

or division head shall appoint any person related or connected by consanguinity within the fourth

degree or by affinity within the second degree;

1. "Consanguinity" means blood relation and degrees are determined as follows:

Parent and child are of the first degree; grandparents, grandchildren, brothers and sisters are of the

second degree; uncles, aunts, nephews, nieces and great grandparents are of the third degree; first

cousins, great uncles and great aunts and great-great grandparents are of the fourth degree.

2. "Affinity" means a relationship by marriage and the degrees are determined as follows: husband and wife are of the first degree; brothers-in-law, sisters-in-law, fathers-in-law and

mothers-in-law are of the second degree.

B. No one may be appointed to a position within a City department if related or connected

by consanguinity within the fourth degree or by affinity within the second degree to any person

sitting on a board or commission representing or advising that department. The above shall include

but not be limited to the following: *City Commission*, Board of Adjustment, Board of Health,

Housing Authority, Library Board, Park and Recreation Board, Parking Commission, Planning

Board, Police Commission.

2.52.070 Distribution. The City Clerk shall cause a copy of this code of ethics ordinance to

be distributed to every public officer and employee of the City within thirty (30) days after

enactment of this ordinance. Each public officer and employee elected, appointed, or engaged

thereafter shall be furnished a copy before entering upon the duties of this office or employment.